

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 IO-13 EUR-12 OES-06 CU-02 CIAE-00

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PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 AGR-05 STR-04 INT-05 /136 W

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R 120917Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7323

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LIBERVILLE

USUN NEW YORK 789

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RP/GB

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BONGO VISITS THE PHILIPPINES

REF: LIBERVILLE 1219

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT BONGO OF GABON VISITED THE PHILIPPINES JULY 8-11. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT MANNER GOP DEALING WITH MUSLIM SITUATION AND PROMISED TO SUPPORT GOP BID FOR MEMBERSHIP AT NAC SUMMIT. PRESIDENTS MARCOS AND BONGO SIGNED GENERAL ACCORD OF COOPERATION PROVIDING FOR JOINT COMMISSION AND COVERING ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION. PHILIPPINES WILL SEND MISSION TO GABON TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITY OF PURCHASING ONE MILLION TONS OF CRUDE.
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BONGO ANNOUNCED MRS. MARCOS WILL VISIT LIBERVILLE.

GOP PULLED OUT ALL STOPS FOR HISTORIC VISIT OF FIRST AFRICAN HEAD OF STATE TO MANILA. VISIT DOMINATED FRONT PAGES FOR FOUR DAYS WITH GUIDED PRESS COMMENTING THAT IT WAS ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF GOP'S SUCCESSFUL POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT AND INDICATED MARCOS' GROWING STATURE IN THIRD WORLD. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT EL HADJ OMAR BONGO AND MRS. BONGO ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOR COOPERATION, MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION, GABONESE AMBASSADOR TO BRUSSELS AND NEW GABONESE AMBASSADOR TO MANILA, JOACHIM PALLARD, VISITED PHILIPPINES JULY 8-11. PRESIDENT MARCOS GAVE STATE DINNER IN THEIR HONOR JULY 8 AND BONGOS OFFERED RETURN DINNER JULY 10. BONGO RECEIVED HONORARY DEGREE FROM FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY AND VISITED CORREGADOR AND EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE IN BATAAN. HE HELD TALKS WITH MARCOS ABOARD PRESIDENTIAL YACHT AND SIGNED GENERAL ACCORD OF COOPERATION. JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED AT CONCLUSION OF VISIT AND PRESIDENTS HELD JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE.

2. MUSLIM SITUATION: PARA 10 OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE NOTES BONGO EXPRESSED CONCERN OF ISLAMIC COUNTRIES ABOUT MUSLIM SITUATION. MARCOS GAVE "COMPREHENSIVE EXPLANATION" CITING IMPROVEMENTS IN MUSLIM WELFARE. BONGO REITERATED THAT MUSLIM SITUATION "AN INTERNAL PROBLEM AND WITHIN THE FULL SOVEREIGNTY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES" AND INDICATED SATISFACTION AT WAY MARCOS HANDLING IT. BONGO PROMISED CONVEY THIS MESSAGE TO HIS ISLAMIC COLLEAGUES. MARCOS EXPRESSED HOPE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS COULD MEET IN MANILA. HE ANNOUNCED CREATION OF NEW POST OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR ISLAMIC AFFAIRS. INCUMBENT WILL BE PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR TO SAUDI ARABIA PANGANDAMAN. DURING PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER SIGNING OF COMMUNIQUE, BONGO SAID HE WAS AWARE OF CHANGES GOP ENGAGED IN "GENOCIDE" AGAINST MUSLIMS AND HE WAS REASSURED TO FIND THAT THIS WAS NOT TRUE.

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3. NON-ALIGNMENT: PARA 7 IN COMMUNIQUE NOTES RENEWED GREAT POWER RIVALRY IN WORLD. TWO PRESIDENTS AGREED "NON-ALIGNED" POSTURE WAS REALISTIC APPROACH FOR "MEDIUM SIZED STATES" LIKE PHILIPPINES AND GABON. COMMUNIQUE SAID GOP WISHED FULL MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATION OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES. BONGO "PROMISED TO SUPPORT THE PHILIPPINE APPLICATION." AT ONE POINT DURING PRESS CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, BONGO'S INTERPRETER REFERRED TO

SUPPORT FOR GOP'S "OBSERVER STATUS."

4. GENERAL ACCORD OF COOPERATION: THIS PROVIDES FOR INTENSIFIED ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION. BOTH GOVERNMENTS WILL WORK FOR ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS IN TRADE FIELD; CONDUCT PRE-INVESTMENT STUDIES TO IDENTIFY AREAS OF COOPERATION; COOPERATE IN FIELDS OF ENERGY; AND INCREASE CULTURAL CONTACTS. ACCORD PROVIDES FOR JOINT COMMISSION HEADED BY FOREIGN MINISTERS WHICH WILL MEET ANNUALLY TO SUPERVISE ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

5. COMMUNIQUE: IN ADDITION TO LANGUAGE ON MUSLIM SITUATION AND NON-ALIGNMENT, COMMUNIQUE NOTES TWO PRESIDENTS' SUPPORT FOR OBJECTIVES OF GROUP OF 77 AND NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER. PARA 9 REAFFIRMS PRESIDENTS' OPPOSITION TO RACISM AND "FIRM CONVICTION THAT RACISM IN ALL ITS MANIFESTATIONS IS A GROSS VIOLATION OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS." MARCOS ALSO EXPLAINED ASEAN ZONE OF PEACE PROPOSAL TO BONGO WHO "NOTED WITH SATISFACTION" ITS OBJECTIVES CLOSE TO THOSE PURSUED BY CENTRAL AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION. PARA 11 NOTES MARCOS' DECISION TO SEND RESIDENT AMBASSADOR (MONICO R. VICENTE CURRENTLY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION) TO LIBERVILLE AS FIRST RESIDENT AMBASSADOR. DURING PRESS CONFERENCE, BONGO SAID MARCOS WOULD BE SENDING MRS. MARCOS TO LIBERVILLE.

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6. ECONOMIC MATTERS: PARA 12 OF COMMUNIQUE STATES MARCOS AND BONGO DISCUSSED EXPORTS WHICH COULD BE EXCHANGED FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT. GOP EXPRESSED INTEREST IN POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF PETROLEUM, MANGANESE, AND CACAO. GABON WILL CONSIDER IMPORTS OF PHILIPPINE MANUFACTURES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. GOP MISSION WILL SOON VISIT GABOON TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF ONE MILLION TONS OF OIL. GOVERNMENTS WILL ALSO INVESTIGATE JOINT VENTURES ON SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE. POSSIBLE PROJECTS ARE FOOTWEAR FACTORY, TEXTILE AND GARMENTS FACTORY, FURNITURE FACTORY AND COCOA PROCESSING PLANT. IN ADDITION TO POSSIBLE GOP PARTICIPATION IN LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, GOP AGREES TO RECRUIT FILIPINO TECHNICIANS FOR GABON IN FIELDS OF HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, PUBLIC WORKS AND EDUCATION.
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7. MEDIA COVERAGE: BONGO VISIT DOMINATED GUIDED PRESS FOR LAST FOUR DAYS. COMMUNIQUE SIGNING CEREMONY AND PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING WERE CARRIED LIVE BY GOVERNMENT RADIO. EMPHASIS IN REPORTAGE AND EDITORIALS HAS BEEN ON "HISTORIC NATURE" OF BONGO VISIT. HE IS FIRST BLACK AFRICAN HEAD OF STATE TO VISIT PHILIPPINES. GABONESE/PHILIPPINE RELATIONS ARE "ANOTHER LINK" IN GOP CHAIN OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THIRD WORLD AND CONFIRM GROWING STATURE OF MARCOS IN THIRD WORLD MOVEMENT.

8. COMMENT: MARCOS PULLED OUT ALL STOPS FOR BONGO VISIT. COMMUNIQUE'S LANGUAGE ON MUSLIM SITUATION AND GABONESE SUPPORT FOR GOP PARTICIPATION IN NAC SUMMIT SUGGESTS EFFORT WAS WELL WORTH IT, ALTHOUGH IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT INFLUENCE (IF ANY) BONGO WILL HAVE ON HIS COLLEAGUES IN THESE MATTERS. DISCUSSION OF JOINT VENTURES, INCREASED TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION, ETC. SEEMS A TRIFLE GRANDIOSE AND IMPRACTICAL SINCE GABON IS LABOR SHORT FOR SUCH INDUSTRIES AS SHOES, TEXTILES, ETC. POSSIBLE

OIL PURCHASE ALWAYS OF INTEREST HERE SINCE ONE MILLION TONS IS 8 PERCENT OF ANNUAL REQUIREMENT. OIL EXPERTS SUGGEST GOP MIGHT FIND IT TOUGH TO CONTRACT FOR SUCH AN AMOUNT SINCE ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF GABON'S OIL CONTROLLED BY PRIVATE SECTOR.

9. BONGO APPEARED TO ENJOY HIS MANILA VISIT. ASKED BY REPORTERS WHETHER HE WOULD LIKE TO VISIT OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES HE SAID YES, BUT NOTED HE FIRST HAD TO BE INVITED. MARCOS' PRINCIPAL PURPOSE IN VISIT, I.E., FURBISHING HIS IMAGE AS THIRD WORLD STATESMAN AND SECURING ADVOCACY FOR HIS MUSLIM POLICY AND PARTICIPATION IN NAC SUMMIT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED. WE LEAVE IT TO EMBASSY LIBERVILLE TO COMMENT ON WHAT BONGO GAINED FROM VISIT ALTHOUGH HE SEEMED QUITE SATISFIED AS HE DEPARTED IN HIS AIR GABON JET FOR SHOPPING IN HONG KONG. SULLIVAN

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